

México Podcast Chatter – 26 de agosto de 2026

Our recommendation of the week is *Narcosistema* which presents a preview of Anabel Hernández's book *Narcocracia*. The book is based on the testimony of Sergio Villarreal Barragán, "El Grande," which the author uses to argue that the relationship between organized crime and political power is a long-term phenomenon, including allegations about the 2006 presidential campaign that the episode itself does not accompany with independent corroboration.

Tercer Grado, *Política y Otros Datos*, and *Botepronto* agree that the United States uses visa restrictions as a low-cost tool of political pressure, and analyze how "Andy's" decision to respond through a public letter complicated Claudia Sheinbaum's position, forcing her to balance the defense of her movement with the need to preserve the relationship with Washington.

In business and economics, *MexMoves*, *Dimes y Billetes*, *Whitepaper 10*, and *La Estrategia del Día* agree that Mexico's competitiveness will depend on reviving investment and adapting to a shifting trade environment. *MexMoves* speaks with Gabriel Lozano, J.P. Morgan's Chief Mexico Economist, who argues that weak public and private investment remains one of the main obstacles to faster growth, though he expects the USMCA will likely survive its review. *Dimes y Billetes* analyzes the rise of aesthetic medicine and cross-border medical tourism, *Whitepaper 10* examines the contrasting trends of hard discount and aspirational luxury in retail, and *La Estrategia del Día* follows the breakdown of trade negotiations between the United States and Canada and its implications for Mexico.

On domestic politics, *Broojula* and *El Noti* round out the picture. *Broojula* analyzes the crisis triggered by Rubén Rocha Moya's brief return as governor of Sinaloa and his renewed leave little more than a day later, arguing that the episode temporarily resolves the conflict within Morena but not the state's institutional crisis. *El Noti* follows the week's security and organized crime stories, from the rise in extortion to the chaos caused by criminal groups in Michoacán. *Ciberdiálogos* presents a conversation between León Krauze and former presidential candidate Xóchitl Gálvez, who credits Sheinbaum's shift in security strategy as a success but argues that her government's main unresolved challenge is combating alleged corruption within her own movement.

Finally, in history and culture, *Sal con Amigos* speaks with writer Enrique Serna about *El Dios hambriento*, his new historical novel set during the rise of the Mexica Empire, which he uses to explore power, violence, and the rewriting of history, even drawing a parallel between the pre-Hispanic tribute system and the current extortion practices of organized crime.

The rise of aesthetic medicine shows how social media, medical tourism and regulation are transforming the industry – Dimes y Billetes

Dimes y Billetes analyzes the growth of aesthetic medicine in conversation with Karen Carrillo, a physician specializing in aesthetic medicine and aging, who warns that the sector's expansion has been accompanied by treatments promoted on social media, unrealistic expectations and procedures performed by professionals who may lack the appropriate specialization. Carrillo argues that aesthetic medicine should prioritize personalized treatments backed by scientific evidence and regulatory approval, even when that means refusing procedures patients are willing to pay for. The conversation also examines the business behind the industry, from investment in technology, marketing and staff training to cross-border medical tourism: Carrillo says around 60% of patients at her Mexicali clinic come from the United States, attracted in part by significantly lower prices. The episode suggests that, as demand grows and new treatments and medications gain popularity, competitiveness in the sector will increasingly depend on combining innovation and commercial expansion with professional ethics, specialization and patient trust.

24/08/2026, Moris Dieck with Karen Carrillo, Dimes y Billetes

Weak investment is limiting Mexico's growth despite opportunities from the USMCA and the technology boom – MexMoves

MexMoves analyzes Mexico's economic outlook in conversation with Gabriel Lozano, J.P. Morgan's Chief Mexico Economist, who argues that weak public and private investment remains one of the main obstacles to faster growth. Lozano forecasts GDP growth of 1.4% in 2026 and 1.7% in 2027 and warns that Mexico has not invested sufficiently in energy and infrastructure to fully capitalize on the US technology boom and its economic integration with the United States, while the automotive sector faces greater tariff pressures. The conversation also examines Plan México, which Lozano considers directionally positive but constrained by fiscal and regulatory limitations, as well as the need for deeper fiscal consolidation given the growing weight of Pemex and CFE on public finances. The episode argues that Mexico retains significant advantages over other economies in the new trade environment and that the USMCA is likely to survive its review, but warns that capturing these opportunities will depend on reviving investment, expanding private participation in strategic sectors and generating sufficiently strong growth to stabilize public debt.

24/08/2026, Damian Fraser and Eduardo García with Gabriel Lozano, MexMoves

Hard discount and aspirational luxury reveal how changing consumer behavior is reshaping retail – Whitepaper 10

Whitepaper 10 analyzes contrasting shifts in consumer behavior, from the rapid expansion of hard-discount retailers in Mexico to the growing importance of aspirational consumers for global luxury brands. René Lankenau and Karla Berman highlight the expansion of Tiendas Neto, Tiendas 3B and FEMSA's Bara, arguing that low-cost formats could gain significant ground against traditional retailers

by combining private-label products, tight margins and highly efficient distribution networks. The episode also examines Mexico's continued reliance on cash, particularly among lower-income households, which helps explain why some discount retailers are experimenting with cash-only stores. At the opposite end of the market, the hosts discuss how brands such as Gucci, Louis Vuitton and Burberry generate a significant share of sales from middle-class consumers willing to spend disproportionately on aspirational products, while more exclusive brands seek to protect scarcity and long-term brand value. Together, these trends illustrate how retailers are adapting their business models to increasingly differentiated patterns of affordability, aspiration and consumption.

19/08/2026, René Lankenau and Karla Berman, [Whitepaper 10](#)

Weekly Summary – La Estrategia del Día

This week, *La Estrategia del Día* focused its coverage on growing trade tensions in North America, the international expansion of Mexican companies and major corporate and financial developments. The episodes analyzed the breakdown of trade negotiations between the United States and Canada and its potential implications for Mexico and the USMCA review, as well as US pressure on Mexico to restrict the entry of Chinese products through its market. On business, the podcast covered Omnilife's expansion into the United States with a new plant in Texas, renewed interest in Fibra E and the financial situation of Braskem Idesa. It also followed the dispute between Aeroméxico and Delta and the Trump administration, Nissan's strategy in Mexico and the outlook for robotics. The week's agenda was rounded out by developments involving companies such as Shein, Moderna, Netflix, Amazon and Mattel, alongside trends in the global copper market.

19/08/2026–24/08/2026, [La Estrategia del Día](#)

Mexican Political Affairs

US pressure and media regulation deepen the debate over sovereignty, freedom of expression and institutional strength – Tercer Grado

Tercer Grado analyzes a week marked by the revocation of Andrés Manuel López Beltrán's US visa, the government's allegations of a supposed digital ecosystem amplifying false information, and the debate surrounding the new audience rights guidelines. Denise Maerker, Enrique Acevedo, Raimundo Riva Palacio and Leo Zuckermann agree that the United States is using visa restrictions as a low-cost tool of political pressure, although they disagree over the government's response and the implications of turning individual cases into matters of national sovereignty. The conversation connects these tensions with Mexico's polarized domestic environment and questions the decision by government officials to publicly identify journalists and media outlets as participants in coordinated disinformation networks. The panelists also warn that giving the state greater powers to oversee content and sanction broadcasters could create incentives for self-censorship. Ahead of the 2027 elections, the episode argues that these controversies reflect a broader debate over the limits of state intervention, freedom

of expression and Mexico's institutional capacity to respond to growing domestic and external pressures.

20/08/2026, Denise Maerker, Enrique Acevedo, Raimundo Riva Palacio and Leo Zuckermann, Tercer Grado

Rocha Moya's return and renewed leave deepen political and security uncertainty in Sinaloa — Broojula
Broojula analyzes the political crisis triggered by Rubén Rocha Moya's brief return as governor of Sinaloa after 112 days on leave and his decision, little more than a day later, to step aside again following pushback from the federal government and Morena. In conversation with journalist Adrián López and analyst Karol Solís, Ana Paula Ordorica examines questions surrounding the reasons for his return, including investigations related to the murder of Héctor Melesio Cuén and ongoing US proceedings involving former Sinaloa officials, although the participants acknowledge that there is no public evidence establishing a direct connection. The episode argues that the new leave temporarily resolves the internal conflict within Morena but does not address Sinaloa's broader institutional crisis, as violence, disappearances and economic deterioration persist. It also suggests that the episode could generate further tensions with the United States and leaves a central question unresolved: whether the next interim government will be able to distance itself from Rocha's political group and offer a different response to a security crisis approaching its second year.

24/08/2026, Ana Paula Ordorica with Adrián López and Karol Solís, Broojula

Andy López Beltrán's visa revocation increases pressure on Morena and signals further tensions with the US ahead of 2027 — Política y Otros Datos

Política y Otros Datos analyzes the political implications of the revocation of Andrés Manuel López Beltrán's US visa and the Trump administration's growing use of visa restrictions as a tool of political pressure. In conversation with political scientist Blanca Heredia and Javier Rosiles, professor and researcher at the Universidad de la Ciénega del Estado de Michoacán, Mariel Ibarra examines how the lack of explanations surrounding these decisions fuels speculation about possible links to corruption or organized crime, although the participants stress that a visa revocation is an administrative measure and does not in itself constitute evidence of a criminal investigation. The episode argues that the case places Claudia Sheinbaum in a particularly difficult position, forcing her to preserve her relationship with the movement founded by López Obrador while maintaining economic and security cooperation with Washington. It also warns that weaknesses in Mexico's justice system and the intersection between politics and organized crime increase the country's vulnerability to US pressure and could turn these allegations into a significant electoral narrative ahead of the 2027 elections.

20/08/2026, Mariel Ibarra with Blanca Heredia and Javier Rosiles, Política y Otros Datos

Andy López Beltrán's letter increases pressure on Sheinbaum and turns his visa revocation into a political problem for Morena — Botepronto

Botepronto analyzes the controversy surrounding the revocation of Andrés Manuel López Beltrán's US visa, focusing particularly on his decision to respond publicly with a letter portraying the episode as a political attack against Morena. Carlos Puig, María Scherer, Salvador Camarena and Carlos Heredia agree that the response complicates Claudia Sheinbaum's position by turning an individual consular decision into a matter of sovereignty and forcing the president to balance defending her political movement with the need to preserve relations with the United States. The panelists also question the political cost of Sheinbaum publicly defending Morena figures and argue that the controversy makes it increasingly relevant to scrutinize López Beltrán's role during his father's administration and the journalistic allegations surrounding his political and business network. Looking ahead, the episode anticipates further US actions involving Mexican political figures and suggests that the Andy case is part of broader bilateral pressure that could continue to shape Morena's political agenda.

18/08/2026, Carlos Puig, María Scherer, Salvador Camarena and Carlos Heredia, Botepronto

Xóchitl Gálvez credits Sheinbaum's security shift but argues that protecting Morena allies remains her administration's main weakness – Ciberdiálogos

Ciberdiálogos presents a conversation between León Krauze and former presidential candidate Xóchitl Gálvez on the first two years of Claudia Sheinbaum's government and Mexico's political and economic outlook. Gálvez credits the president with changing the country's security strategy and pursuing organized crime more aggressively, but argues that her main unresolved challenge is combating alleged corruption within her own political movement, accusing the government of selectively protecting Morena figures while pursuing opponents. The conversation also examines growing US pressure on Mexico over fentanyl, fuel smuggling and organized crime, with Gálvez supporting deeper bilateral security cooperation while rejecting any US armed intervention. On the economy, she argues that weak investment, insufficient energy infrastructure and uncertainty following the judicial reform are limiting growth, while the discussion also addresses the government's proposed audience rights rules and the future of the opposition ahead of the 2027 midterms and 2030 presidential election. Gálvez contends that opposition parties will need greater unity to compete with Morena, but warns that alliances built solely around winning elections risk reproducing the same political practices they criticize.

25/08/2026, León Krauze with Xóchitl Gálvez, Ciberdiálogos

Weekly Summary – El Noti

This week, *El Noti* focused its coverage on security, organized crime and growing pressure on several Mexican institutions. The episodes examined the rise in extortion in 2026, the release in the United States of Sinaloa's former security secretary and new developments surrounding the kidnapping of Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, as well as violence caused by criminal groups in Michoacán. On politics, the podcast followed reports linking Andy López Beltrán to a fuel-smuggling investigation, Rubén Rocha Moya's return and renewed leave as governor of Sinaloa, and developments involving the president of Mexico's Electoral Tribunal. It also covered alleged irregularities in Mexico City procurement processes,

the debate over new rules for media outlets and the reinstatement of private medical insurance benefits for Supreme Court justices. The week's agenda was rounded out by the breakdown of trade negotiations between the United States and Canada, US deportations of Mexicans to Central America, and concerns surrounding climate change and artificial intelligence.

19/08/2026–24/08/2026, [El Noti](#)

Security and Crime

“El Grande’s” testimony underpins new allegations of decades of collusion between organized crime and Mexican politics – Narcosistema

Narcosistema presents a preview of Anabel Hernández's new book, *Narcocracia*, based on a series of interviews with Sergio Villarreal Barragán, “El Grande,” a former member of the Sinaloa Cartel who later became a cooperating witness for the US government. Hernández argues that his testimony helps reconstruct how criminal organizations allegedly developed networks of complicity with public officials, business leaders and political actors over several decades, gradually expanding their influence over local and national governments. The episode focuses particularly on Villarreal's claims regarding Andrés Manuel López Obrador's 2006 presidential campaign, including his allegation that he personally delivered money to the then-candidate and that members of the Sinaloa Cartel negotiated financial support in exchange for future government commitments; these are allegations attributed to Villarreal that the episode does not independently corroborate. Hernández uses these statements to argue that the relationship between organized crime and political power is not an isolated anomaly but a long-term phenomenon that, in her view, helps explain current tensions between Mexico and the United States, as well as investigations and visa restrictions involving several Mexican political figures.

20/08/2026, Anabel Hernández, [Narcosistema](#)

Mexican Culture & Society

Enrique Serna uses the rise of the Mexica Empire to explore power, violence and the construction of history – Sal con Amigos

Sal con Amigos speaks with writer Enrique Serna about *El Dios hambriento*, his new historical novel set in 1430, during the rise of the Mexica as the dominant power in the Valley of Anáhuac. Serna explains that the novel reconstructs the rivalry between Nezahualcōyotl and Tlacaélel, using it to explore competing approaches to political power, as well as the religious reforms and rewriting of history that accompanied the consolidation of the Mexica Empire. The conversation also examines less idealized aspects of the pre-Hispanic world, including human sacrifice, inequality and the subordinate position of women, while identifying cultural continuities between that society and contemporary Mexico. Serna notably draws a parallel between the tribute system imposed on conquered peoples and modern extortion and protection payments imposed by organized crime, while stopping short of establishing a direct causal

link between the two. Overall, the episode argues that historical fiction can offer a more complex view of Mexico's pre-Hispanic past and challenge both its idealization and the political narratives constructed around Mexican history.

24/08/2026, Salvador Camarena with Enrique Serna, Sal con amigos